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Dear Chairman Zimmerman and Members of the Board of Directors:

The Riders' Advisory Council (RAC) received a briefing at our July meeting on Metro's proposed Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2010-2015. While riders' focus is often on system operations, many of the complaints heard during the last round of fare increase hearings – and at RAC meetings – relate directly to Metro's capital spending. New and more railcars and buses, improved signage, more-reliable elevators and escalators are all dependant on Metro's capital funding plan.

The CIP program that is coming to a close – known as Metro Matters – has funded improvements which have had a profound impact on Metro's 1.2 million daily riders. New railcars have allowed Metrorail to increase train lengths to alleviate crowding and handle the influx of new riders who continue to set high-ridership records. New buses have improved Metrobus reliability and provide a more comfortable, accessible and environmentally-friendly ride for bus passengers. Riders are also benefiting from rehabilitated elevators and escalators, renewed stations and parking facilities and from improved support facilities that service Metro vehicles.

This same kind of commitment to ensuring comfortable, dependable and reliable service for Metro's riders that led to the development of the original Metro Matters program must also permeate the Board's discussion on the FY2011-FY2015 capital program. As Metro continues to mature, keeping infrastructure in a state of good repair must remain the Authority's top priority. Failures of critical components can result in delays and frustration for thousands of passengers. With Metrorail bumping up against capacity limits during many hours of the day, each delay can affect the system for a long time, even after the initial problem is resolved.

In addition to new buses, new and rehabilitated railcars and infrastructure rehabilitation, all of which will undoubtedly be the focus of the next capital program, the Council would also like staff and the Board to look at other projects that could go a long way to improve the rider experience. Along with construction projects, the Board also has the opportunity to improve the system by making improvements in infrastructure. These would include the following (not in priority order):

- Construct pedestrian tunnels between Metro Center and Gallery Place and between Farragut North and Farragut West;
- Extend platform canopies at above-ground stations to help protect riders and the paving material from the weather;
- Extend the program to install canopies over all outside escalator bays;

- Continue and expand upgrades of rail station loudspeaker systems to improve audibility of announcements on all levels of stations – mezzanines, platforms, etc.;
- Improve signage (that is accessible to all riders) at both rail stations and bus transfer areas as well as at bus shelters along route. This could include more and clearer signage at fare card machines to help new riders, more posted copies of the expanded bus/road maps around stations to help passengers make other route choices when there are service disruptions, more signage concerning rules of the rails – including no eating or drinking in stations or on trains, and clearer bus route information at shelters;
- Work with whomever wins RFP for Metro Channel and provide whatever other funds over the RFP that would be necessary to make sure the Metro Channel screens are placed in strategic areas in all rail stations as well as above ground at bus transfer areas;
- Expand, explore and acquire technology to allow customers to receive information on cell phones and PDAs to keep up with advances in technology;
- Continue to work on train control systems to improve on time and predictable service;
- Fund and make sure NextBus technology is resumed and improved.

The members of the Riders' Advisory Council, as riders of Metro's bus, rail and paratransit services, know what a tremendous asset the Metro system is to the Washington region and support Metro's efforts to keep the system in a state of good repair. The RAC also urges the Board to consider items that would make the system even better, in terms of the comfort and convenience of its riders. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues throughout the development of the next capital program.

The RAC certainly shares the Board's hope that the federal government will be an active partner in funding Metro's next capital plan, given the system's unique and critical role in serving the Nation's Capital. However, if the federal government chooses not to be a partner in this CIP, the role of Metro's jurisdictional partners becomes even more critical. The current CIP, Metro Matters, has achieved much for WMATA's customers, and this next iteration of the capital program is just as important in furthering and broadening these achievements. The RAC looks forward to working with the Board as it tries to reconcile Metro's needs with the region's available resources.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nancy Iacomini, Chairman